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EXAMINER

POKRZYWA, JOSEPH R

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2622

DATE MAILED: 05/07/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/195,604

Applicant(s)

TOMIDOKORO ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph R. Pokrzywa

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 8-29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 30-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment was received on 2/25/02, and has been entered and made of record. Currently, **claims 1 through 36** are pending, with **claims 8 through 29** being withdrawn from consideration, as being a non-elected invention.

Response to Arguments

2. Upon review of the prior art of Ito (U.S. Patent Number 5,373,349), cited in the Office action dated 12/5/01 as anticipating **claims 1 through 7**, the examiner finds that the claims, as amended, still do not overcome the reference. While the sections cited by the examiner in the Office action dated 12/5/01 indeed do not teach of *displaying* a signal line separation message, the examiner notes that Fig. 8 of Ito, as well as the corresponding description, teach of displaying a signal line separation message when the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over the predetermined period, as required by the claim. Particularly, Ito teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4, wherein only one machine is shown) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit ("no" in S111 of Fig. 8) over a predetermined period ("after a prescribed time period elapses", as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states "automatic transmission can not be

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made to service center. Please make service call to *** _****") when the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in S111 and "yes" in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32).

3. Applicant's arguments filed 2/25/02, with respect to **claims 1 through 7**, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's arguments regarding the rejection of independent *claim 1*, which state on page 8, that Ito fails to teach if each of the image forming devices are configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over a predetermined period. The examiner notes that the requirement of the image forming device also detecting the loss of signals between the image forming device 100 and the communication control unit 200, as argued by applicant, is not particularly required by the claim. The limitation of detecting if the image forming device "has no signal from *at least one* of the central service station and the communication control unit" can be interpreted as detecting no signal from the central service station, or detecting no signal from communication control unit. As discussed above, Ito teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4, wherein only one machine is shown) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station (being the center computer apparatus 90) and the communication control unit (being the modem 72) over a predetermined period, whereby as read in column 7, lines 22 through 27, which states "if the communication line between the CPU 11 of the data terminal 1 and the CPU 91 of the center is not connected (S111;NO), ... after a prescribed time period elapses, the message 35 ... is

displayed”, thereby teaching of detecting no signal from the central service station, as required by the claim. Further, the central service station, interpreted as the center 90, is connected to the copying machine 4 through the communication control unit, interpreted as modem 72, as seen in Figs. 1 and 3, Ito thereby indirectly shows that no signal is detected from the modem 72).

Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art can recognize and interpret Ito as teaching the current limitation requiring each of the image forming devices being configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over a predetermined period, and displaying a signal line separation message when the image forming device has no signal. Because of this, the rejection of *claim 1* is maintained and repeated in this Office action.

Continuing, applicant argues on page 9, that Ito fails to teach the limitations of dependent claims 2 through 6, which require the image forming device detecting if the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit. As discussed above, Ito indirectly shows that no signal is detected from the modem 72, interpreted as the communication control unit, since no signal is detected from center 90, which is connected to the copying machine 4 through modem 72, as seen in Figs. 1 and 3. Because of this, the rejection of *claims 2 through 6* is maintained and repeated in this Office action.

Continuing, applicant argues on page 9, that Ito fails to teach the limitations of currently amended independent claim 7, requiring the display of the signal line separation message that indicates a separation of the signal line between the image forming device and the communication control unit. As discussed above, Ito teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4, wherein only one machine is shown) is configured to detect that the

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image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit (“no” in S111 of Fig. 8) over a predetermined period (“after a prescribed time period elapses”, as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states “automatic transmission can not be made to service center. Please make service call to *** _****”) when the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over the predetermined period (“no” in S111 and “yes” in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32). Further, Ito teaches that the display of the signal line separation message (message 35, as read in column 7, lines 22 through 32, and seen in Fig. 6) indicates a separation of the signal line between the image forming device and the communication control unit (wherein the message 35 indicates that there is no signal line between the image forming device and the communication control unit). Because of this, the rejection of *claim 7* is maintained and repeated in this Office action.

4. Therefore, the rejection of *claims 1 through 7*, as cited in the Office action dated 12/5/01, under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ito, is maintained and repeated in this Office action.

Claim Objections

5. **Claim 36** is objected to because of the following informalities:

In **claim 36**, line 1, "A means for image forming management system" is unclear. The examiner suggests changing the preamble to read "A means for image forming management", therein erasing the word "system".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

7. **Claims 1 through 7, and 30 through 36** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ito (U.S. Patent Number 5,373,349, cited in the Office action dated 12/5/01).

Regarding **claim 1**, Ito discloses an image forming device management system including a plurality of image forming devices (see Fig. 1, copying machine 4, and column 5, lines 60 through column 6, line 7, wherein only one is shown in the figure), a central service station for providing a maintenance service for the image forming devices (center computer apparatus 90, column 3, lines 39 through 53, and column 9, lines 27 through 36), and a communication control unit connected to each of the image forming devices by a signal line (modem 72, see Fig. 3), the communication control unit (modem 72) connecting one of the image forming devices to the central service station by a communication network (telephone network, see Figs. 1 and 3, and column 7, lines 9 through 14), wherein each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the

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central service station and the communication control unit ("no" in S111 of Fig. 8) over a predetermined period ("after a prescribed time period elapses", as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states "automatic transmission can not be made to service center. Please make service call to *** _****") when the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in S111 and "yes" in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32).

Regarding *claim 2*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 1, and further teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a response of the image forming device to a selecting of the communication control unit to the image forming device (column 7, lines 3 through 32).

Regarding *claim 3*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 1, and further teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from the central service station over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a response of the image forming device to a selecting of the central service station to the image forming device (column 7, lines 3 through 32).

Regarding *claim 4*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 1, and further teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that

the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a response of the image forming device to a polling of the communication control unit to the image forming device (column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 33).

Regarding *claim 5*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 1, and further teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) includes a communication interface unit (modem 52, see Figs. 1 and 3, column 5, lines 3 through 9) having a terminal connected to the communication control unit (modem 72, see Figs. 1 and 3), and each of the image forming devices is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a detected voltage of the terminal of the communication interface unit (column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 10, lines 20 through 60, whereby it is inherent in the operation of the modem 52 to detect a voltage while detecting signals on the public telephone line).

Regarding *claim 6*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 1, and further teaches that each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) includes a connection detecting circuit (modem 52, see Figs. 1 and 3, column 5, lines 3 through 9) having an input connected to the communication control unit (modem 72, see Figs. 1 and 3), and each of the image forming devices is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on an output of the connection detecting circuit (column 5, lines 3 through 9, column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 9, line 37 through column 10, line 60).

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Regarding *claim 7*, Ito discloses an image forming device management system including a plurality of image forming devices (see Fig. 1, copying machine 4, and column 5, lines 60 through column 6, line 7, wherein only one is shown in the figure), a central service station for providing a maintenance service for the image forming devices (center computer apparatus 90, column 3, lines 39 through 53, and column 9, lines 27 through 36), and a communication control unit connected to each of the image forming devices by a signal line (modem 72, see Fig. 3), the communication control unit (modem 72) connecting one of the image forming devices to the central service station by a communication network (see Figs. 1 and 3, and column 7, lines 9 through 14), wherein each of the image forming devices (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the image forming device has no signal from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit (“no” in S111 of Fig. 8) over a predetermined period (“after a prescribed time period elapses”, as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states “automatic transmission can not be made to service center. Please make service call to *** _****”) when the image forming device has no signal from the communication control unit over the predetermined period (“no” in S111 and “yes” in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32), and wherein the display of the signal line separation message (message 35, as read in column 7, lines 22 through 32, and seen in Fig. 6) indicates a separation of the signal line between the image forming device and the communication control unit (wherein the message 35 indicates that there is no signal line between the image forming device and the communication control unit).

Regarding *claim 30*, Ito discloses an image forming device management system including a plurality of means for image forming (see Fig. 1, copying machine 4, and column 5, lines 60 through column 6, line 7, wherein only one is shown in the figure), means provided for the plurality of means for image forming (center computer apparatus 90, column 3, lines 39 through 53, and column 9, lines 27 through 36), means for communicating and controlling connected to each of the means for image forming by a signal line (modem 72, see Fig. 3), the means for communicating and controlling connecting one of the means for image forming to the maintenance service means by a communication network (see Figs. 1 and 3, and column 7, lines 9 through 14), wherein each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from at least one of the maintenance service means and the means for communicating and controlling (“no” in S111 of Fig. 8) over a predetermined period (“after a prescribed time period elapses”, as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states “automatic transmission can not be made to service center. Please make service call to *** _****”) when the means for image forming has no signal from at least one of the maintenance service means and the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period (“no” in S111 and “yes” in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32).

Regarding *claim 31*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 30, and further teaches that each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period (“no” in step S111, and “yes” in step S125 in Fig. 8)

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based on a response of the means for image forming to a selecting of the means for communicating and controlling to the means for image forming (column 7, lines 3 through 32).

Regarding *claim 32*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 30, and further teaches that each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the maintenance service means over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a response of the means for image forming to a selecting of the maintenance service means to the means for image forming (column 7, lines 3 through 32).

Regarding *claim 33*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 30, and further teaches that each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a response of the means for image forming to a polling of the means for communicating and controlling to the means for image forming (column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 33).

Regarding *claim 34*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 30, and further teaches that each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) includes a communication interface unit (modem 52, see Figs. 1 and 3, column 5, lines 3 through 9) having a terminal connected to the means for communicating and controlling (modem 72, see Figs. 1 and 3), and each of the means for image forming is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on a detected voltage of the terminal

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of the communication interface unit (column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 10, lines 20 through 60, whereby it is inherent in the operation of the modem 52 to detects a voltage while detecting signals on the public telephone line).

Regarding *claim 35*, Ito discloses the system discussed above in claim 30, and further teaches that each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) includes a connection detecting circuit (modem 52, see Figs. 1 and 3, column 5, lines 3 through 9) having an input connected to the means for communicating and controlling (modem 72, see Figs. 1 and 3), and each of the means for image forming is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period ("no" in step S111, and "yes" in step S125 in Fig. 8) based on an output of the connection detecting circuit (column 5, lines 3 through 9, column 7, lines 3 through 32, and column 9, line 37 through column 10, line 60).

Regarding *claim 36*, Ito discloses a means for image forming device management including a plurality of means for image forming (see Fig. 1, copying machine 4, and column 5, lines 60 through column 6, line 7, wherein only one is shown in the figure), maintenance service means provided for the means for image forming (center computer apparatus 90, column 3, lines 39 through 53, and column 9, lines 27 through 36), and means for communicating and controlling connected to each of the means for image forming by a signal line (modem 72, see Fig. 3), the means for communicating and controlling (modem 72) connecting one of the means for image forming to the maintenance service means by a communication network (see Figs. 1 and 3, and column 7, lines 9 through 14), wherein each of the means for image forming (copying machine 4) is configured to detect that the means for image forming has no signal from the

means for communicating and controlling (“no” in S111 in Fig. 8) over a predetermined period (“after a prescribed time period elapses”, as read in column 7, lines 3 through 32) and to display a signal line separation message (message 35 is displayed, see Fig. 6, and as read in column 7, lines 25 through 32, wherein a message is displayed which states “automatic transmission can not be made to service center. Please make service call to ***_****”) when the means for image forming has no signal from the means for communicating and controlling over the predetermined period (“no” in S111 and “yes” in S125, column 7, lines 22 through 32).

Conclusion

8. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joe Pokrzywa whose telephone number is (703) 305-0146. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30-4:00.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on (703) 305-4712. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9314 for regular communications and (703) 872-9314 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

J.R.P.

Joseph R. Pokrzywa
Examiner
Art Unit 2622

jrj
May 3, 2002


EDWARD COLES
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